



### Outdoor recreation opportunities forever!

The USDA Forest Service strives to provide a variety of high quality recreation opportunities and experiences for visitors to enjoy in the Cherokee National Forest (CNF).

By industry standards, CNF's annual maintenance costs for its recreation facilities should be around \$600,000. Current funding levels, however, do not allow the Forest Service to accomplish this necessary work. This means deferring annual maintenance needs every year. We can no longer afford to continue to finance aging facilities, poorly designed trails and underused day-use and camping sites.

With increased costs, fiscal realities, changing public expectations and demand we must manage the recreation program for generations to come.

At certain sites there may be a reduction of or elimination of services, eventual site closures, less maintenance, shorter open seasons, etc.

### What are we doing?

In the Ocoee Ranger District, this shift will soon be seen at Sylco Campground, Tumbling Creek Campground, and Quinn Springs Campground. The bathrooms at these sites have been boarded up for several years, after having been deemed unsafe for visitors.

The time has come to decommission these bathrooms, demolish them, and remove them. Infrastructure at Quinn Springs, if functional, such as tables, fire rings, signs, posts, etc. will be removed and utilized at other recreation sites in the future. We will also be decommissioning old wells and reservoirs that are no longer in use.

Elsewhere in the Ocoee District, we are investing resources into recreation. Bathrooms at Thunder Rock

and Chilhowee Campground and Day Use Areas have been renovated, with new roofs and interior improvements. Inaccessible walkways at the Ocoee White-water Center, Spring Creek Shooting Range, Towee Creek Boat Launch on the Hiwassee River have been replaced. The Powerhouse Launch on the Hiwassee has been reconfigured to protect resources and better serve outfitters and guests.

Chilhowee Campground has a brand new water system. You will also see site improvements at Parksville and Mac Point Beaches.

The Ocoee Whitewater Center has had roof repairs, accessibility improvements, water course repairs, and interior work done, and the trail bridges will be re-decked in the coming year. New fee tubes have also been installed to prevent theft. Your fees are at work!

### What does it mean?

We must meet the reality of increasing deferred maintenance and decreasing financial resources and personnel for operations, maintenance, and repair. Visitors will see projects across the CNF that reduce deferred maintenance, as well as investments to improve various popular sites.

We are shifting our resources and time to sustainable opportunities, investing in priority recreation sites and skills, and proposing changes to sustain valued opportunities for present and future generations.

With these changes, we hope the recreation experiences of our visitors continue to attest to the commitment the Forest Service has to caring for the land and serving people.

